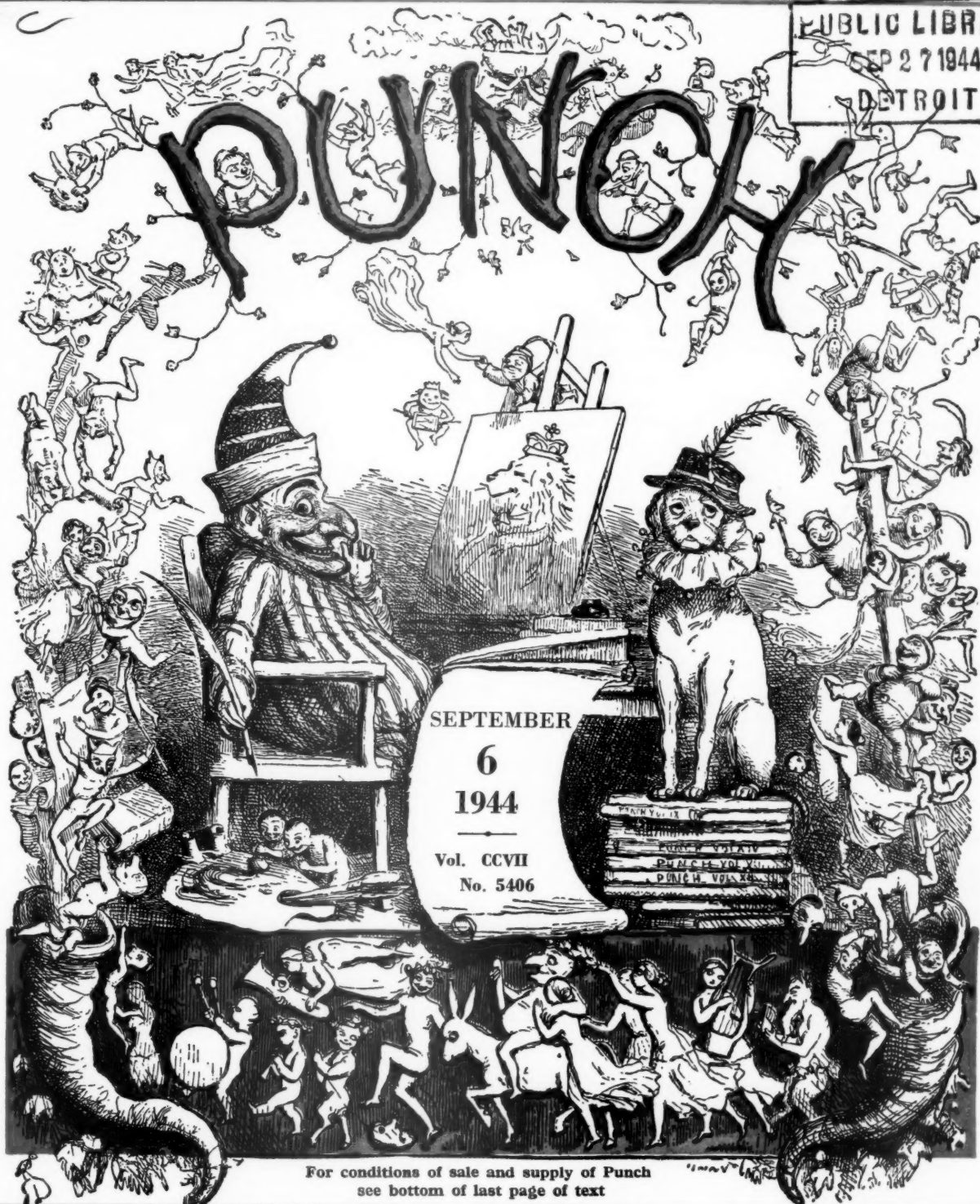


The best that
money can buy...
or points procure

Huntley & Palmers Biscuits

PUBLIC LIBRARY
SEP 27 1944
DETROIT



For conditions of sale and supply of Punch
see bottom of last page of text



Player's Please





IN FRANCE AGAIN

Four years ago the Y.M.C.A. Mobile Canteens—what were left of them—came with the B.E.F. to the beaches at Dunkirk. They served there until the last van had been destroyed and until the last of the stores had gone.

Now the Y.M.C.A. has returned to France to serve our liberating armies. New Mobile Units are operating in Normandy. Others will follow. Equipment for clubs and hostels has been assembled, teams of workers recruited and specially trained. This time the Y.M.C.A. service to the Forces must be on a vastly greater scale. **Help the Y.M.C.A. —every shilling you can spare is needed now.**

Donations may be sent to the Lord Mayor of London, Acting President of the National Y.M.C.A. War Service Fund, The Mansion House, London, E.C.4, or to the Y.M.C.A. War Service Fund, 10, Palmerston Place, Edinburgh. 12

(Registered under the War Charities Act, 1940)



Make Wright's the 'rule' for
the Toilet and Nursery.
Kind to the tenderest skin.



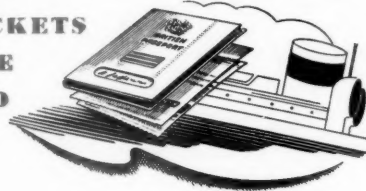
WRIGHT'S
COAL TAR SOAP

ONE TABLET—ONE COUPON

"THAT'S OUR NEW BRANCH ON THE CORNER
ALL THE DESKS, COUNTERS,
GRILLES AND OTHER FURNITURE
ARE STEEL BY **SANKEY-SHELDON**
OF COURSE"



**THE TICKETS
WILL BE
BOOKED**



The day will come when forgotten places and new scenes will cast a spell over your memory and your imagination. The spirit of travel will move restlessly within you, and the tickets will be booked. And with you will go your Antler Luggage, a distinguished and accommodating servant to your possessions.



You can't get Antler Luggage now but superb designs will be ready . . . for the day.



ANTLER

The World's Best Luggage

J. B. BROOKS & CO. LTD., BIRMINGHAM

ROSS'S

BELFAST

GINGER ALE
SODA WATER
TONIC WATER

LIME JUICE CORDIAL
LEMONADE
GRAPE FRUIT

Will be in the 'rounds' of the best circles

Note these Facts

NEURITIS has one thing in common with Headache, Sleeplessness, Rheumatism, Toothache, Colds and 'Flu:

like them, it is safely and also speedily relieved by two tablets of 'Genasprin'.

One cause of Neuritis is the abnormal stimulation of the nerves by substances formed during imperfect metabolism. The nerves become inflamed and irritated, and severe pain is the result. In cases of acute, long-standing Neuritis you should, of course, consult a doctor, but in the meantime two tablets of 'Genasprin' taken in a little water can be relied on to reduce and even banish the pain.

'Genasprin' is the absolutely pure, absolutely safe brand of aspirin that will not harm heart or digestion. And fortunately 'Genasprin' is one of the things for which it is no longer necessary to accept a substitute. Ask your chemist for it; he has it in stock at 1/5d. and 2/3d.

At any time of strain or pain
'GENASPRIN'
sees you through!

The word 'Genasprin' is the registered trade mark of Genatosen Limited, Loughborough, Leicestershire.

A NEW LIFE IN A GLASS CASE



This is an ampoule of Penicillin—the drug that's saving hundreds of lives daily. The urgent large scale production of Penicillin would be impossible without Refrigeration and air-conditioning equipment.

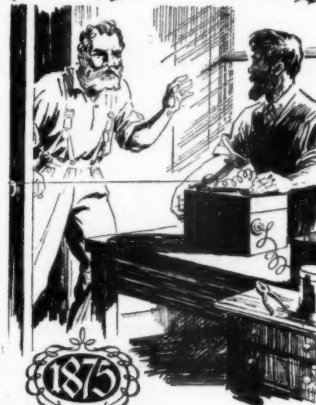
Much of this equipment has been specially designed by us.

Similarly we shall develop new ideas for refrigeration in post-war homes.

FRIGIDAIRE

FRIGIDAIRE LTD., EDGWARE ROAD, THE HYDE, N.W.9.

History in the making



1875
70 years

before Dr. Alexander Graham Bell stumbled upon the discovery which gave the world the telephone, the firm of Seager Evans was founded. With a record of 139 years of fine distilling, they still produce the unrivalled

SEAGERS GIN

25/3
Full size
bottle



13/3
Half
bottle

ESTD 1805



TAKE THIS TIP

CLEANING — Warm soapy water used frequently is the best general cleaner for enamel, chromium, bakelite or paint. Never use gritty pastes.

MAW Gas Cookers

The **SHARPER** the blade

The **SAFER** the shave

Sounds contradictory but it isn't. Use the keen-edged KROPP and see what a smooth, quick shave you get — EVERY morning. Once you buy a KROPP you've done with shaving troubles. No grinding, no upkeep costs. Hand-forged from fine Sheffield steel. A craftsman's triumph.

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Of Hairdressers, Cutlers and Stores.
Send 2½d. stamp for postage and Booklet 160.
OSBORNE, GARRETT & CO., LTD., LONDON, W.1

Buy the Keen-edged

KROPP



INTO BATTLE



From your
retailer—

Paton's
SHOE & BOOT LACES

WM. PATON LTD · JOHNSTONE · SCOTLAND

"I'M GLAD I GOT MY FEET RIGHT!"



Weak arches brought this foreman nearly to breaking point. Fortunately a friend sent him to Scholl's. He says it was the best day's work he ever did. And how right he is! Strong feet give you the staying-power you need to back the men at the front. And no-one need lack them. Expert treatment is available at every Scholl Depot—whether your trouble is a fallen arch or a painful callous. Come in.

Scholl Foot Aids and Appliances are obtainable from Scholl Depots, chemists, shoe-dealers and stores.

Enquiries to 254 Regent Street, London, W.1

Footnotes by **SCHOLL**



A little 'Mansion'—
A light rub—
A lovely polish.

that keeps the home

**BRIGHT.
CLEAN &
HEALTHY**



That's the
way with

MANSION
ANTISEPTIC WAX
POLISH

FOR FLOORS, FURNITURE
& LINOLEUM

SUPPLIES ARE RESTRICTED

STILL LEADING



still made
in 7 colours

still
obtainable
everywhere

and still the best!

Why risk using any but the best cleaner on your precious Suede shoes today?

Meltonian keeps your suede shoes 'new-looking' longer—soft, fresh and free from shiny spots. All good shoe shops sell and recommend it.

Meltonian
SUEDE CLEANER
in 4 oz. bottles, 1/-

To lengthen the life of shoes of polished leather use MELTONIAN CREAM, but use it sparingly, as in the national interest supplies are restricted.



FAMILY TRADITION

The tradition of care and precision distinguishing Kerfoot's Pharmaceuticals has been handed down from father to son since Thomas Kerfoot first turned his attention to manufacturing pharmacy in the 1860's. He pioneered many developments now taken for granted, e.g. compressed tablets, effervescent salines, synthetic local anaesthetics, etc., and the spirit which animated him inspires his descendants to-day.

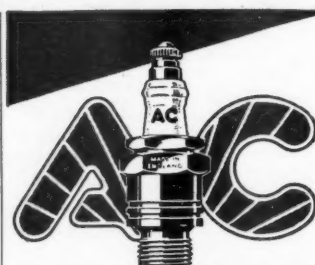
THOMAS KERFOOT & Co. Ltd.
Vale of Bardsley · Lancashire
THE MANUFACTURING EXPERIENCE
OF THREE GENERATIONS KG23

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Post your Films & Negatives to—

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PRICES:
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SUPPLIES LIMITED
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FOR BETTER SHAVES.
SOLD BY NAAFI.

PRECISION BUILT



RELIABLE

The Typewriter of the future

Built on experience of the past.

EMPIRE

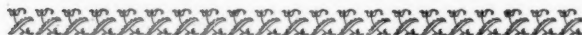
Portable Typewriters

Made in England by
BRITISH TYPEWRITERS LTD.
WEST BROMWICH
and at
150 Southampton Row, London, W.C.1

40 Years' Manufacturing Experience

STURDY

EFFICIENT



AN APOLOGY

THE famous "Powder-Puff" design known by millions of women throughout the world as the symbol of perfect face powder can no longer be printed because of its gay multiplicity of colours. But it will return like other pleasant things with the other luxuries that Peace will bring.

We have had two special packs with our "Powder-Puff" design since the War began. Dealers' stocks of these will soon be exhausted and we are now presenting a third Temporary Model, as illustrated, which, in spite of its spartan simplicity, clearly proclaims the fact that the powder inside retains its pre-war quality.

No change whatsoever has been made in the Coty "Air Spun" formula or processing. The ingredients employed are of the original high standard of purity.

BEWARE of "Air Spun" offered loose or in any other form of pack than the three mentioned above. They can only be imitations.

New War Pack with plain cream background in two sizes 2/6 & 4/9



Coty **"AIR SPUN"**
THE POWDER THAT STAYS ON

C.129



"In the hope
to meet
shortly again,
and make our
absence sweet"

Schweppes



A Kingly Product!

SENIOR'S
FISH & MEAT PASTES



Valstar
"777" Raincoat

SUPERLATIVE
QUALITY AND
DESIGN

IN NORMAL TIMES THE BEST SHOPS
HAVE THE **VALSTAR "777"** RAIN-
COAT—SUPPLIES NOW, HOWEVER, ARE
STRICTLY LIMITED.

VALSTAR LTD., SALFORD 6, LANCs.
Also at 314 Regent Street, London, W.1

Take care
of your
VANTELLA
shirts and
"VAN HEUSEN"
collars . . .
they are scarce!




You get a lot
of goodness
out of a little

Hovis

BEST BAKERS BAKE IT
Macclesfield

Pencil Supremacy



CUMBERLAND

PRODUCED AT THE BIRTHPLACE OF PENCILS
CUMBERLAND PENCIL CO LTD - KESWICK

Cash's

NAME TAPES

To avoid disappointment in the delivery of future supplies customers are urged to order from their Draper well in advance. We regret that in present circumstances we are unable to execute orders with our usual promptitude.

J. & J. CASH LTD., Dept. Pu. 17, COVENTRY

BEAR BRAND HONEY
The Premier Brand

Obtainable only on your
Preserve Ration

THE BEAR HONEY CO. LTD.
Branch of L. Garvin & Co. Ltd.
ISLEWORTH, MIDDLESEX

Tri-ang TOYS

FOR GIRLS AND BOYS

L.B. LTD. London

Always ready to serve...

On the little ships that ran the blockade to Sweden, the Heinz Self-Heating can provided comfort and fresh courage. "Warm food was unobtainable, apart from Self-Heating Soups." Yet another reason, you see, why the famous "57" may be in short supply now and again. But at least you know that our men—your men—are well-fed, in whichever of the Services they may be.



HEINZ

57 Varieties

Baked Beans — Soups — Salad Cream — Mayonnaise
H. J. HEINZ COMPANY LIMITED LONDON

**Never eat a
full meal when
you're tired**

YOUR stomach can't cope with it and digestive strain soon leads to indigestion and ultimately to severe gastric trouble. What your digestion needs is REST. A cup of Benger's Food provides all the warmth and nourishment you require yet it soothes the stomach and gives your digestion a real rest and a chance to build up its strength. Try Benger's tonight...



BENGER'S

**— an essential factor
in REST-THERAPY —
the natural treat-
ment for Indigestion**

BENGER'S, today, is as easy to make as a cup of cocoa. From all Chemists and high-class Grocers — The Original Plain Benger's, Malt Flavoured or Cocoa and Malt Flavoured.

Benger's Ltd., Holmes Chapel, Cheshire.



Mr Gladstone and Zoning

Seventy years ago Mr. Gladstone's latest speech was news! But "rationing," "points" and "zoning" would sound strange news to Mr. Gladstone. For in his day he could have enjoyed as many Romary Biscuits as he liked. It's different to-day. Supplies are limited, but — we look forward to the day when these restrictions will be no more.

ROMARY

'Tunbridge Wells' Biscuits

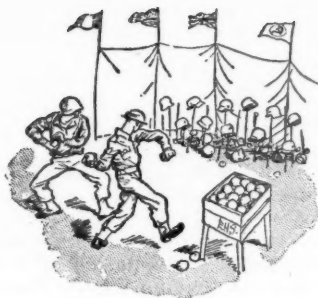
Monk & Glass

CUSTARD

**One of the jolly good
things that's scarce**

*Still the same high quality
Sold by all good grocers*

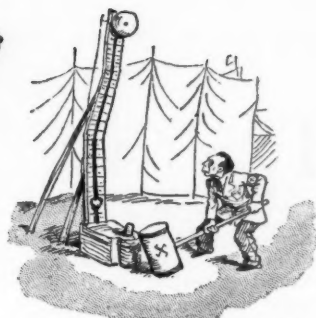




PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCVII No. 5406

September 6 1944

Charivaria

THE beer crisis shows signs of improvement. Soccer has started. Seaside landladies are busy. Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire have arrived. And a careful perusal of the Press discloses that there is good war news too.

Baby wild birds straying from the nest are being tenderly cared for in the Zoo. Jealousy is now making the tame birds wild.



Taxis are running more or less normally in Paris again, otherwise all danger is past.

Londoners have faced the crisis in their history with calmness and dignity, confident that the brewers are doing their best.

"It seems a long time since anything was thrown at me from the audience," says a music-hall performer. Still, he can't expect to be in Ensa indefinitely.

"We lost something when we gave up the habit of gnawing the meat off bones," says a psychologist. Whatever it was, the restaurant proprietors have gained it.

Hitler is now so short of petrol that even the High Command are having to walk to their car accidents.

Fire-Walker

"Lady chef requires post; will go on hot plate; reference."—*Advt. in Yorks paper.*

An American authority on crustacea has married his cook. It remains to be seen whether she will let him help with the pastry.



Sherry, butter, oranges and fillet steaks are obtainable in Dublin. Eire faces its fifth year of peace with calm confidence.

Taps

"An excellent folk dancing display was given by Miss Dorey and pupils, with Mr. Smith on the piano."—*Surrey weekly.*

Goebbels declares that a handful of men can hold the Siegfried Line. Not only that; he hasn't despaired of being able to get them.

Describing a war-time seaside scene, a reporter says that the rubber bathing-costume was rare. When caught in the barbed wire, bathers found the recoil very painful.



A radio correspondent recently described one stretch of the Seine as being ninety miles by road but only fifteen by air. This probably makes it about ten by jeep.

French villagers who were wakened by sounds of activity one night recently found in the morning that it was the Western front that had gone past.

The Paris police assisted materially in the liberation of Paris. And now it is reported that a constable at an English coastal resort cut a gap in the barbed wire for bathers. The liberation of Britain continues.

There has been a cricket match at Leighton Buzzard between butchers and bakers in their working attire. The umpire had many heated arguments on apron-before-wicket.

Eld

THERE is a kind of novel that I do not greatly like, although the fault is my own, and I freely acknowledge it. This is not so much the common historical novel of swords and spurs and plumes, as the prehistorical novel which is awfully and elaborately B.C.

Prehistorical is a bad word and merely indicates that the kind of novel I mean belongs to ages which do not seem to admit of the language and thought of the present day without hurting me badly inside.

Sometimes this sort is really prehistorical.

"I suppose it must be so," said Gur, and his eyes became blinded with tears.

As he left the cave he saw as in a mist the drawing of an aurochs that he had made five years ago for Ug with a piece of pointed bone. And now all was ended. Their temperaments were mutually incompatible. Love had not meant all to them that either had hoped and dreamed. 'Ug,' he sighed, 'Oh Ug!' and wrapping his bearskin closely about him he strode out into the night."

It will be seen at once by the well-disposed reader that Gur and Ug were some sort of anthropoids or pithecanthropes endowed with a twentieth-century sentimentalism, which ought to endear them, but does not endear them to a cad like me.

But I have the same sort of distaste for novels which are not nearly so old in time as the story of Gur and Ug. I do not care for novels about ancient Assyria or even about ancient Greece or Rome.

"What a confounded nuisance!" barked Sempronius Atratinus, gnawing his fist."

When I read a sentence like that, as I frequently do before sending a novel along to the troops in Italy, I have a feeling that I should have preferred the remark to be made in the original Latin. It would have carried much more conviction to my wretched unimaginative mind, and very likely it would have been easier to bark. Or take another passage:

"O.K." agreed Sennacherib.

He had long realized that Rabshakeh was the most dynamic of his cavalry generals, and if the absurd little army of Judah persisted in defying him and it was necessary to take Jerusalem, Rabshakeh was undoubtedly the man for the job. How crazy had seemed the opposition when his tremendous pincer-thrust had borne down on them, with their golden breast-plates and purple tunics, and the sheen of the spears, as he had fancifully told himself, glittering like the reflection of stars upon some local inland sea!

Yet how stubborn had proved this Jewish king!

'You had better see what can be done by propaganda first,' he snapped to the tough rugged-faced Rabshakeh who was kissing his feet. 'Go and shout our peace terms to the men on the wall.'

After all, he had many other cares on his mind. Merodach-baladan was giving trouble again in Babylonia, and there were some architectural details about the palace of Kunyunjik still to be settled. Would fifteen hundred feet be long enough? And then there were his two sons. How difficult boys were becoming nowadays!"

The willing good-hearted reader who is not as I am will instantly perceive that the author of this novel has digested for his benefit not only the Bible, the works of Lord Byron and those of Herodotus, but almost anything else that can be got at in the British Museum. And she will simply love the book. Yet I remain cold, aloof.

"Andromache had a distinct sense of *malaise*. She shuddered as she combed her luxuriant hair."

All right. Let her. But I don't want to hear about it.

Or take this novel that lies in front of me now, selected from a pile of similar books.

"Ozymandias smiled. It was a cold sneering smile, the smile of a man accustomed to command. He had thrown three women of his harem that day into the Caspian and watched them being eaten by crayfish. He had buried three thousand Kurdish captains alive, their heads only remaining above the ground, and he had ordered his last favourite to be impaled. Slowly the great peacock fans waved by Circassian girls fanned his temples as he lounged in his great golden throne studded with sapphires brought by camel-loads from Kashmir. The heat was oppressive. He ran his sensitive fingers through his long black beard, and sank into a reverie.

Then he started and sat upright, clapping his hands.

Oxymoron the Court jester appeared from behind a screen of Khorasan carpets.

'What words do they say of me in the bazaars, Oxymoron?' he jerked to the little hunchback with the hooked nose and shining eyes.

'They say that you are King of Kings, O King of Kings,' simpered Oxymoron, turning a double somersault on the marble floor.

'Wittily answered, good fool,' returned the monarch.

'And yet—and yet I sometimes feel that a day may come when all this pomp and glory of mine may at last be one with Nineveh and Tyre and the pomp and glory of even older dynasties. I had a dream last night, a queer dream, that may have sprung from my subliminal consciousness, in which I thought my statue was standing all alone in the desert—nay, not my statue, O Oxymoron, but only my legs.'

'The legs of Ozymandias alone would beautify any desert like the roses of Ispahan,' was the ready retort of the subservient clown.

'Aye, Oxymoron, but the body of my statue had perished, and my head was half sunken in the sands, and there were words written on my pedestal, words which stated my name and title and bade other tyrants look on my works and beware. Do you think it possible that the deeds of all totalitarian rulers will perish, and their names survive only on graven monuments or even, it may be, on scraps of papyrus? I seem to see kings and conquerors not only of Asia but of the lands west of Asia—'

The intelligent dutiful reader will here turn back to the wrapper thoughtfully supplied by the publisher and note with what skill this vital and arresting novel about Ozymandias is made to presage the sudden rise to power and ignominious collapse of Herr Hitler's regime in Germany, and he will marvel at the labour and research that went to the making of the narrative.

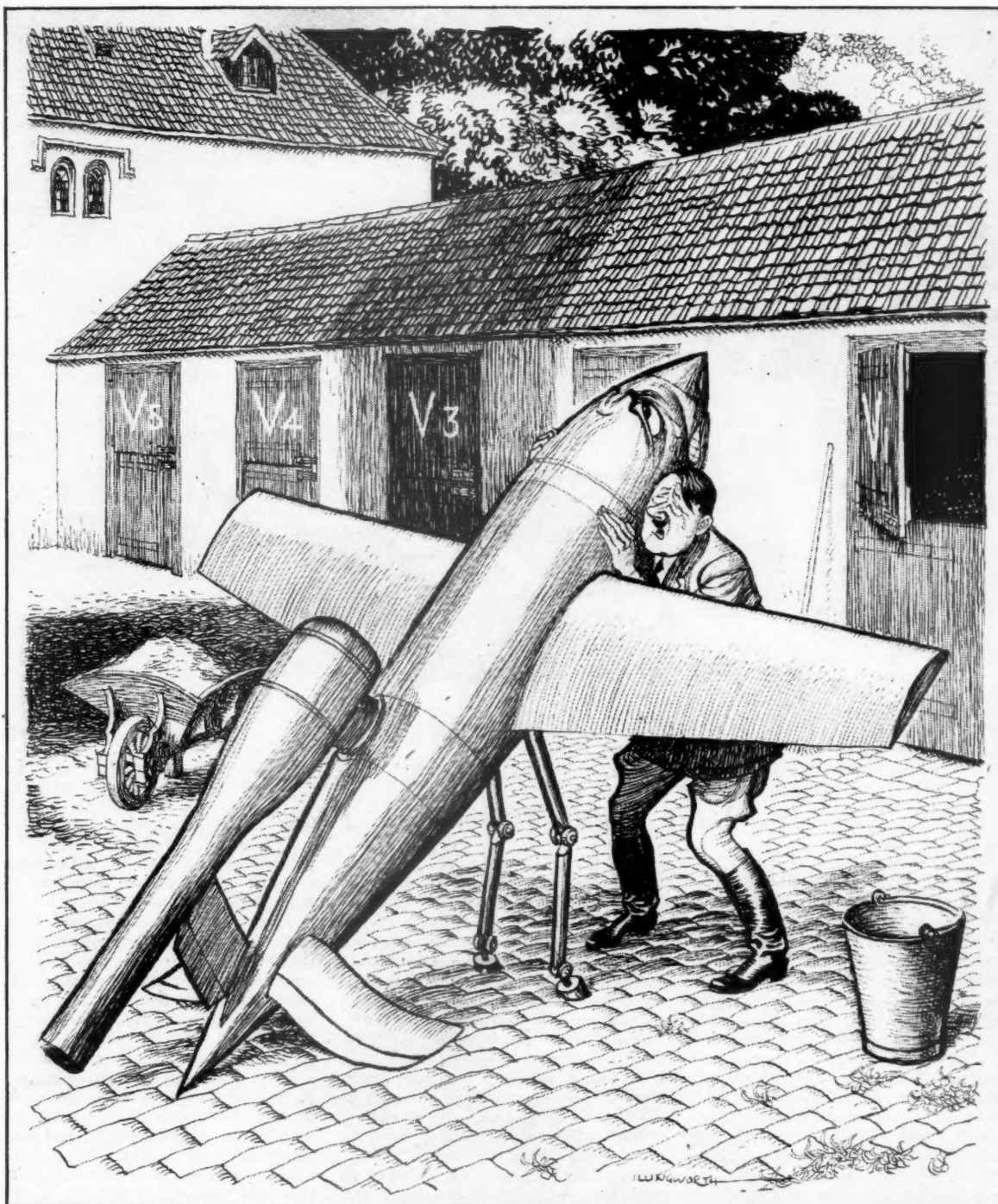
"And more than that, Oxymoron, it seemed to me in the vision of my dream that a traveller many hundreds of years hence will come and gaze at those ruined stones and, looking round him, see nothing but sand, sand, sand . . ."

His voice trailed away.

Oxymoron turned another double somersault. He could not think of anything else to do."

It is at this point that I resolutely close this kind of novel, never to open it again.

EVOE.



ADOLF'S FAREWELL TO HIS STUNT

"The time may be at hand when we two must part; but it's been wonderful while it lasted."

children's outfits are cut down for toddlers, toddlers' for tots, tots' for B.I.A. (babies in arms) and B.I.A. for their parents. Thus the whole family help each other. For instance, when big brother John leaves school his discarded satchel makes splendid hard-wearing crawlers for little Doris, whose outgrown pinnie cuts into new bibs for baby Gordon. And the best bits of the old bibs, herringboned together, make a lovely face flannel for Daddy or perhaps a smart collar for Mother.

Toys too. Everyone knows the kind of humpy bottle which has no use after the contents have been used. We cover these with material, sew on some jaunty feathers for a tail, add a painted cardboard head and legs, and there is the loveliest cockyolley-bird. The only thing against it is that, being glass, it is rather dangerous for children to play with, but we are now trying to get a Government permit for wood, to carve into the same shape.

We have lectures of course to keep us up to the mark. Not only on Make Do and Mend, but on any household problems that might interest our members. "Twenty Things To Do With Father's Trousers," "Making the Best of a Bad Egg," "What To Do With Grannie When She's Bedridden," and "New Homes for Old Earwigs" were a few recent ones.

Finally, the members and I are slowly compiling a book of a hundred home hints, culled from the experiences of all, which are really invaluable and which Mr. Dalton will be very foolish if he does not accept for the Board of Trade when finished. I quote a page, chosen at random, to show how thoroughly we have covered our ground.

A cure for sleeplessness. Take a large Spanish onion to bed with you. You will have such a bad night that the following one you will find that nothing will keep you awake.

For those whose figure keeps on widening (like myself!). Cut one dress down the middle, embroider gay-coloured eyelet holes, then lace it with dyed string over another tighter dress of a contrasting shade.

A good substitute for sun tan is ammonia mixed with brown boot polish. Rub up with an old sock.

Badges. Military badges, Scout and Guide devices, or shields from your children's outgrown school blazers, make attractive motifs to cover holes or worn parts in underclothes.

A cure for bags under the eyes. Sleep upside-down and the bags will often work through to a less noticeable part of the body.

Stockings that are hopelessly gone at

the foot make excellent winter coats for dachshunds.

Never throw away corset bones. They make into book-markers, poker chips, spaghetti winders, tooth-picks for horses.

Brighten up buns by placing them in the sun and covering them with a used fly-paper. They will soon be as shiny as pre-war buns, and any dead flies that happen to stick will look like so many currants.

A good tooth-paste for children is scouring powder mixed with chocolate malt spread. They won't shirk teeth-cleaning then!

Hysteria in piano tuners is easily cured by laying the man on the keyboard and opening his instrument case.

The colour of fish should be bright and clear. Remove the fishmonger's finger-marks with arsenic and polish with old lace.

When you are washing dainty lingerie do not include in the same basin any golf balls, door-mats, fountain-pens, bicycle baskets, or any Benares brass article.

To preserve the life of a cook—if you are fortunate enough to have one—keep in a cool place when not in use.
M. D.

In a Green Shade

THE small lead garden god
Is sleeping yet—
Forgotten his pan-pipes.

With gold-black zebra stripes
Painted, the bees still set
Their course to golden rod,
To mignonette
Or Canterbury bells.

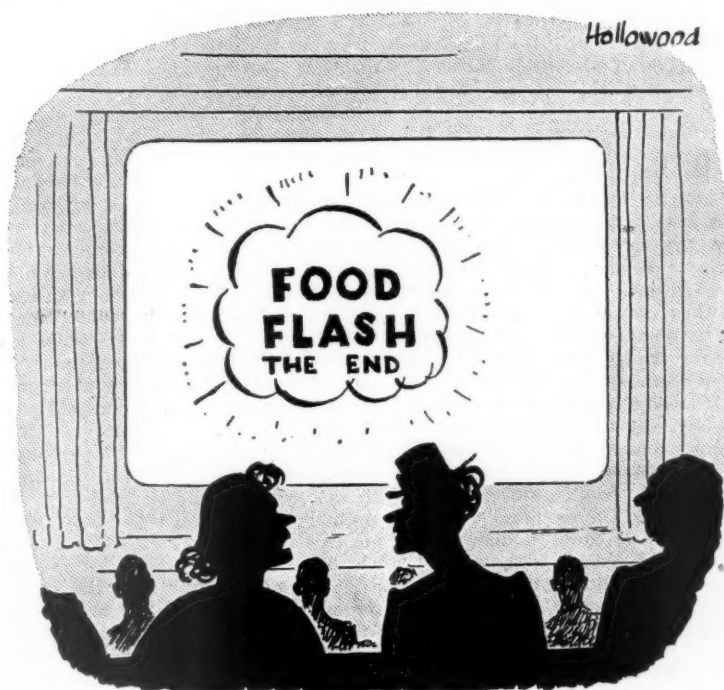
The garden, flower by flower
Drowns. The gnomon tells
Stern truth about the hour,
The seeming-endless hour
Of summer afternoon
Which passes all too soon.

Though broken is the spell
This green place held for me
Since one in Normandy
Who once this green lawn trod
Sleeps, like the garden god
Which he remembered well.

R. C. S.

Those Killing Recitations

"Elocution is what the Americans give people instead of hanging them."
Schoolboy's answer.



"In the pamphlet she had four children, all under school age."

Toller Applies

To Svelte Limousines, Ltd.

SIRS,—With reference to the return of private motoring after the war, as heralded by Svelte Limousine advertisements showing a girl in a bathing-dress talking to a man in a Svelte limousine with the caption "One Thing We Fight For—The Svelte Limousine"—this stirring message, incidentally, you may be interested to hear, has been stuck on the wall of our present billet by 2/Lt Stookley—with reference to this advertisement and the intention of your firm, expressed in small lettering at the foot, to resume its position in the forefront of the limousine industry, I submit my application herewith to share in post-war limousine work, having always been interested in this subject, especially so since riding in carriers and armoured cars with only occasional access to staff vehicles.

On this point, it is my opinion, perhaps not fully appreciated among limousine circles in the home country, that cars of a super-soft type such as the Svelte could be given a special sales appeal by contrasting their comfort with conditions recently experienced by customers inside tanks and other Army vehicles. In addition might be worked in a slight snob appeal with such slogans as "Be Like The General—Ride in a Svelte Limousine" or "Brigadier Smith, your car's at the door."

From these suggestions it will be seen that my services might be used on the advertising side of the business, and I believe, in fact, I could work harmoniously with the type of model favoured by the publicity branch of the firm: possibly I could also sit inside limousines and talk to bathing belles, thus saving male model fees, since I have experience of taking part in an Army instructional film when I appeared against the skyline as a demonstration of the incorrect method of crawling. Further publicity knowledge was acquired when I was for a short time Assistant Intelligence Officer at Brigade; I being instructed by the Intelligence Officer how, when a senior staff officer came suddenly into our room, to run quickly to the window and release a balloon, this being a picturesque feature of meteorological intelligence work.

I may, however, further be considered qualified for a senior position on the sales side. For two years I have dealt with officers of every type, from captain to general, who have come to

inspect Troop vehicles; with the result that I can talk convincingly on most motoring subjects except to ultra-mechanical customers, for whom I could perhaps be allotted the equivalent of an M.T. Sergeant. I have of course no actual experience of selling a vehicle, but on one occasion on C.O.'s Inspection I displayed the smartness of a 5 Troop carrier so it procured first prize, despite having to be quietly towed off at the conclusion of the parade.

Should an outcome of the war be the desire in some ex-Service customers to use limousines for cross-country work, I am here in a position to demonstrate over plough, rough moorland, bogs and even private gardens, through standing corn where necessary, hedges and small rivers, in which connection I have attended two waterproofing courses and submitted plans to the War Office for using armoured cars as submarines.

I should also be pleased to assist in vehicle recovery work. During one moment of training on the South Downs, 5 Troop had simultaneously a carrier running backwards out of control down the hill from Chanetonbury Ring, an armoured car suspended by a tree on the same wooded slope, and a motor-cyclist about to be thrown from his machine which finished in a village.

I understand that limousine executives, and especially salesmen, must be of the right type, and I enclose the only full-length photograph in my possession. This photograph was unfortunately taken while I was a cadet at an OCTU early in the war and this accounts for the subdued expression and the fact that I am glancing slightly over my left shoulder, since cadets were watched at all times in order to check up on their military efficiency. I have normally a more confident expression and have acquired the correct intonation for dealing with wealthy classes likely to purchase limousines, on the lines of a senior OCTU lecturer who suggested as a method of advancement the pronouncing of "Fire Power" as "Fah Pah," which has on several occasions proved most effective, notably during questioning by a general on a field exercise when I confined my answers solely to this phrase with the result that other Troop Commanders were later criticized for not appreciating the importance of Fah Pah.

In addition, I possess a number of

influential friends who, although without actual money of their own, know people who have and would be willing to recommend Svelte Limousines in return for my recommending acquaintances made through the limousine industry to night clubs, circuses, paint firms, etc., with which they hope themselves to be connected.

Should I take a position with your firm, presumably I would be allowed a Svelte limousine for my own use.

Yours faithfully,

B.L.A.

J. TOLLER, Lt.

Our Games

THE battalion came out of the line for a rest three days ago, and yesterday we had a Games to celebrate it. I mean a Games—not some games or a game—a Highland Games. Not that we are a Scottish battalion; far from it. We are dyed-in-the-blood Cockneys, but a Highland Games seemed the only way in which we could forestall our hearty and muscular little adjutant, who was planning to give us Tabloid Sports.

Tabloid Sports, in case you are lucky enough to have avoided them, consists in as many people taking as much violent exercise in as short a time as possible, and then getting back to the serious business of weapon training, route marches, etc. Whereas everyone knows that the really pleasant thing about true regimental sports is that they should

(1) involve serious participation by a very few—only those who actually enjoy running or who hope to win a prize substantial enough to outweigh the unpleasantness involved.

(2) provide the maximum amusement for the spectators *i.e.*, all the rest of the battalion.

(3) go on for as long as possible, at any rate for a day and a half; that is to say, you spend a morning getting the field ready, the afternoon running off the events, and the evening celebrating. The next morning is spent recovering, under pretext of putting everything straight again—what the Army calls Interior Economy.

There should also be beer, sun, ices, beer, shade, tea, beer, and so on.

For beer, in this country, one has unfortunately to substitute vino, which is not the same thing at all. It doesn't taste the same. You can't drink a quarter as much and still look your company commander in the eye. Nor can you escape a filthy head the next

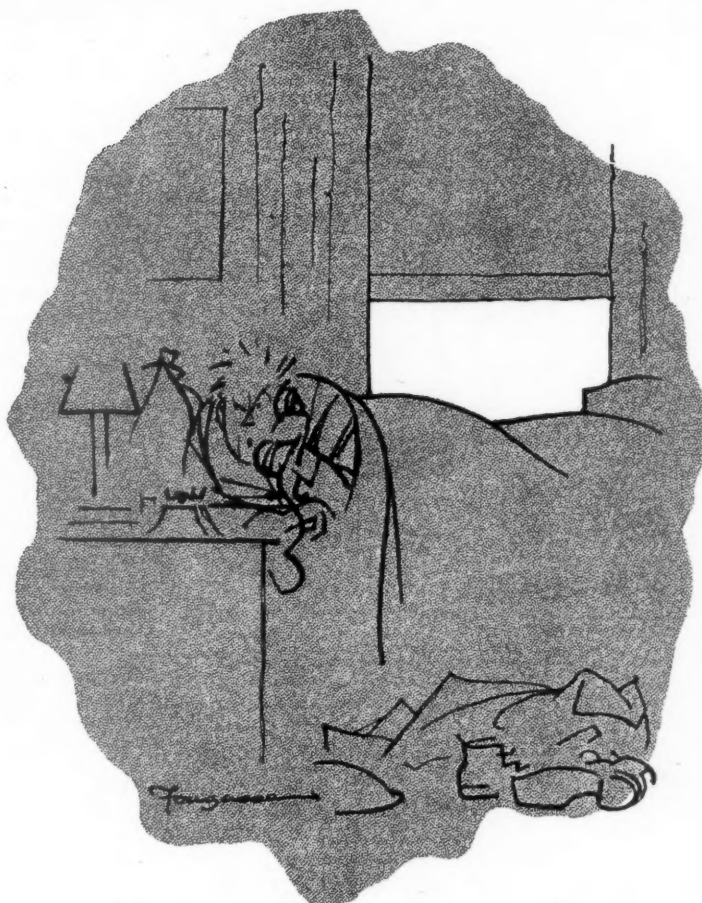
morning. For all that, it's better than dehydrated tea rehydrated.

The charm about a Highland Games is that they go on for a very long time and very few people have to take part. Any fool may be expected to run in a race, but only the experts toss the caber or enter for a piping competition. Even the few participants don't really work very hard. It's true the caber is heavy, but other people do the energetic part of lifting it up for you. It's the same with the fifty-six pound weight and the hundred-and-twelve-pound hammer.

We got into a spot of trouble over our caber, because the unimaginative R.S.M. detailed an even less imaginative private to fetch him a straight pole six inches round and twenty feet long, and to look slippy about it, young fellow-me-lad. Though why the lad had to be found cutting down a telegraph pole just when the O.C. Divisional Signals drove past is more than we could understand. And after all that, there were no entries for the event.

Now we well knew our long-suffering Colonel would not stand for an event with no entries. He was prepared to wink at a Highland Games in preference to Tabloid Sports, but not at a Highland Games sans caber and sans piper. So that night a new form of pack-drill was evolved. After a sudden and, some said, quite uncalled-for kit inspection, seven defaulters were found and paraded behind the nearest hill. There, a colour-sergeant cursed them into achieving wonders with the caber, which he himself had never seen tossed except on the films. Eventually, it was decided that as none of them could even once produce one fair throw, and that as the Colonel was most unlikely to know the difference between a fair throw and a foul, the prize should go to the defaulter who got the base of the caber furthest from his own toes. The event, however, was only a fair success, but it was much appreciated by the spectators, who were given great scope for their unrivalled and unbridled Cockney comments.

Over the piper we frankly cheated: we borrowed him from one of the other battalions in the brigade. And very well he did us—for the early part of the afternoon. Unfortunately, he had not read the recent motherly Army Order explaining to the troops that a litre of vino contains as much alcohol as two-thirds of a bottle of pre-war Scotch whisky or four gallons of pre-war beer. The Highland reel competition which was to have taken place in the officers' mess after tea had therefore to be cancelled.



"Why, Mabel, how nice of you to ring up so early to ask for my news! The only news I've got, Mabel, is that I've been on duty all night, Mabel, and that I'm just trying to get an hour's sleep, Mabel, before going off to the office, Mabel."

For the rest the sports were much like any others. An Officers v. Sergeants Tug-of-War, politely won by the Sergeants on the last pull. An Old Soldiers handicap sternly contested between the Quartermaster and the R.Q.M.S., who had thirty-one and thirty-three yards to run respectively. An "Officers Only" race which led to heavy betting and renewed ribaldry from the spectators, and finally a prize-giving at which the beautiful daughter of the local farmhouse deputized for the Colonel's wife.

Enjoyable as the afternoon was, it unfortunately failed in its main purpose. There were so many bad-tempered majors and bleary-eyed subalterns this morning, and so many

other ranks were late on parade, that the following notice went up by order of the Colonel: "All officers and other ranks will take part in Tabloid Sports at 1600 hrs. this afternoon. No exemptions."

"Another Mosman airman in the person of S/Ldr. W. L. Kerr, R.A.A.F., attached to H.Q. Third Tactical Air Force, India, is carrying on the good work for King and country as will be seen from the announcement recorded in the 'London Cigarette' under date 14th January, 1944 . . ."

Australian paper.

"The London Charivari" is glad to welcome "The London Cigarette" and to give it this well-deserved puff.



"Anyone ELSE in the class a gum-chum of our American allies?"

The Ballad of the "Bluebell"

(With respectful reference to the admirable exploit of Petty Officer Alan Baker, of L.B.V.37)

THE *Bluebell* was a lighter, a dumb barge, a box,
For to lighten the ships in the stream and the docks;
But she weren't very big, and she weren't very new,
And she lay on the barge-roads with nothing to do.

Now, the lighters of London, they've names like a yacht,
Such as *Blossom*, and *Zephyr*, and *Pilgrim*, and *Grot*;
But their bottoms is flat, and, between you and me,
They was never intended to travel by sea.

But they took them old lighters, a thousand or more;
They cut out the ends and they put in a door;
They gave 'em a wheel, and a motor so fine,
And painted 'em camouflaged like a ship of the line.

Bill Fox was a lighterman, Bermondsey born,
A Freeman of the River, and twenty years sworn.
He could work a big lighter like a little canoe,
And all what's to know of the River he knew.

You should see him a-drive—or, as you would say, drift—
With a mighty great sweep that you can't hardly lift,
A-hitting the bridge-holes as nice as you please,
And making it look like a lifetime of ease.

All alone in his craft, with the wind right ahead,
A bit late on his tide, he'll drive on till he's dead.
For this is the oath all the lightermen swear:
"I'll never lay down till I get the craft *there*."

He knew every eddy from Vauxhall to Grays,
And the set of the tide, and the craft and their ways,
And the buoys and the lights from Barn Elms to the sea;
But he didn't know more of the compass than me.

Now one day they says "Come, you lightermen all;
We're going for to crack this here Hitler's West Wall:
But the Navy can't do without lightermen like you!"
And the lightermen of London they done what was due.

They come up from Tilbury, they come down from Kew,
From the Prospect of Whitby, and the Dog and Duck too,
From Galleons, from Bugsby's, from Bow Creek and all,
For to help the Royal Navy crack up the West Wall.

They made Bill a petty officer, with a peak to his hat;
They taught him some drill, and the compass, and that;
They gave him two stokers, two seamen, A.B.,
And there he is, captain of a Landing Barge (V).

Well, according to orders the *Bluebell* sets sail;
It's rough, and it's blowing a bit of a gale;
They lose the old convoy, the engine breaks down—
And there she lays rolling like a lord-about-town.

The stokers they struggle but can't get things clear;
When up comes a corvette and says "What's all this here?
You're out of the battle, but don't you despair,
For I'm bound for U.K. and I'll tow you back there."

"Why, thank you," says Bill, "but that's no use to me;
For I've got to deliver these vehicles, you see;
I'm a lighterman of London, and I beg to declare
I never lay down till I've got the craft *there*."

Then Bill to his crew he says "Boys, are you game
To take these here vehicles across just the same?"
"Aye, aye," says the stokers, "we've only one care,
Which is, how we proceeds—and, for that matter, where?"

Says Bill "They're so keen on 'Security' now,
They didn't say where we was bound, I allow;
But I fancy it's France, and, the wind being fair,
Well, what I suggest, we proceeds over there.

"And as to the first point, we've got the two sweeps
And we've got the tarpaulin what covers the jeeps:
I'd row the ship over if it weren't for the gale,
But we'll rig the tarpaulin and see if she'll sail!"

Well, that's what they done. It weren't easy, of course;
For that old tarpaulin she pulls like a horse;
But they hit the right part of the coast, which was queer,
And Bill says the Americans stood him a beer.

They've left them old lighters on the Normandy shore;
We won't see the *Bluebell* at Limehouse no more:
But they're lightening the steamers, a job that they know,
And passing the mustard for Hitler and Co.

And Bill's back in civvies as right as the rain,
A-driving his craft through the bridge-holes again:
So let's take a pint, sir—no more than is due—
To the lighters of London—and the lightermen too. A. P. H.

H. J.'s Dramatic Fragments

THE next Fragment was led up to by an apparition which used to root about in our box-room for its marriage lines. For many years it came punctually at three o'clock on the first Tuesday in the month, unless it happened to be Boxing Day. Trouble began when the twins started to tease it. They kept riding to and fro through the middle of it on their indoor scooters, and this made it so dizzy that it staggered, though in quite a refined way. When it eventually found the marriage lines, which were inside a blunderbuss we had bought for the children to practise with before they went into their school O.T.C., it called to say how much it had enjoyed its visits and to ask for a memento of us; so I wrote it this Fragment and my wife looked out a pair of jodhpurs she had outgrown. As she went out of the window for the last time the apparition was again badgered by the twins, who, playful to the last, hurled huge handfuls of confetti after it which stuck all the way through, like currants in a cake.

DICED CARROTS or THE GAMBLING GLUTTON

(The scene is a tour of London.)

GUIDE. Next we pass St. James's Palace.

DRIVER. Not us, we don't. We're going up that street over there. Where does it lead to?

GUIDE. I put my sandwiches in the map and it's come off on them. I can't read the print without a looking-glass.

DRIVER. Get one on appro. at the next furniture shop.

SPORTING PARSON. I think this is Piccadilly Circus which we have reached during the discussion; I saw a lot of it after the Boat Race one year.

GUIDE. Piccadilly Circus, right you are. In the middle you see a statue in honour of the Bowmen of England. Now watch carefully and you'll see an open space called Leicester Square, which somehow avoided being lived in by Dr. Johnson. The part in the middle is sown with grass seed. Next we come to the back of the National Gallery, which is called the National Portrait Gallery.

SPORTING PARSON. There is the statue of Sir Henry Irving. Well, well, how that takes me back; the things I have thrown at that man—and from boxes too!

GUIDE. Here we are back again to have another look at Nelson on his mast acting as look-out, hence the lions' being by Landseer.

SHERIFF SUBSTITUTE. Hoots, the Strand, nae sae gaudy but mair practical than yon coral one in India.

GUIDE. We are now passing Somerset House, which is owned by the nation.

DRIVER. It won't be long now, Aucassin, till we get to the Law Courts. You had better prepare their minds. Very Gothic indeed they'll find them.

GUIDE. These Law Courts aren't such a draw as the Old Bailey, but they have a sort of *succès d'estime*. They are rather crowded round the edge, but there is a lot of space in the middle. I wonder they don't let it for dances. Next we come to Fleet Street, which is associated with something in my mind—Doctors?—Jewellers?—Second-hand motor-cars?

SUPERCARGO SULLIVAN. I think it's dens of some kind.

SPORTING PARSON. Only recently, if so.

GUIDE. Anyhow, this is Ludgate Hill, and if you go into the church up there don't whisper in the gallery because you can be overheard.

DRIVER. What say we go down Cheapside?

GUIDE. Just let me find it in my notes. There is the Guildhall. It is the most famous dining-room in London, even more so than Sampsons. Next we have the Mansion House, whatever that may mean. Anyhow, the Lord Mayor lives there, but only on a yearly tenancy; being furnished it doesn't come under the Rent Restriction Act and so they can turn him out. Nearly opposite is the Bank of England, better known as the Mother of Parliaments.

DRIVER. Now we are going to do a bit of straightforward driving without interruptions.

THE OLDEST TOURIST. But it's the interruptions we've come for. We can't have too many of them.

GUIDE. Doesn't anybody ever think of me? I suppose if I talked myself into a decline you would merely give a light laugh and pass on. I am naturally a very taciturn man; speaking to strangers at all is an ordeal for me. The only way I can do it is by despising them.

SHERIFF SUBSTITUTE. Anyhow, it looks as though we've reached the Tower of London. Surely you are not going to let that pass without comment.

GUIDE. The Tower of London is wider than the Eiffel Tower but not so high. In many ways Tower Bridge is more like a tower except for being horizontal rather than vertical, though that is almost forced upon it by its tendency to come in two in the middle. That's the lot, thank you. All change!

SPORTING PARSON. But we haven't seen the Ring, Blackfriars, yet.

THE OLDEST TOURIST. Aren't you going to take us back to the starting point?

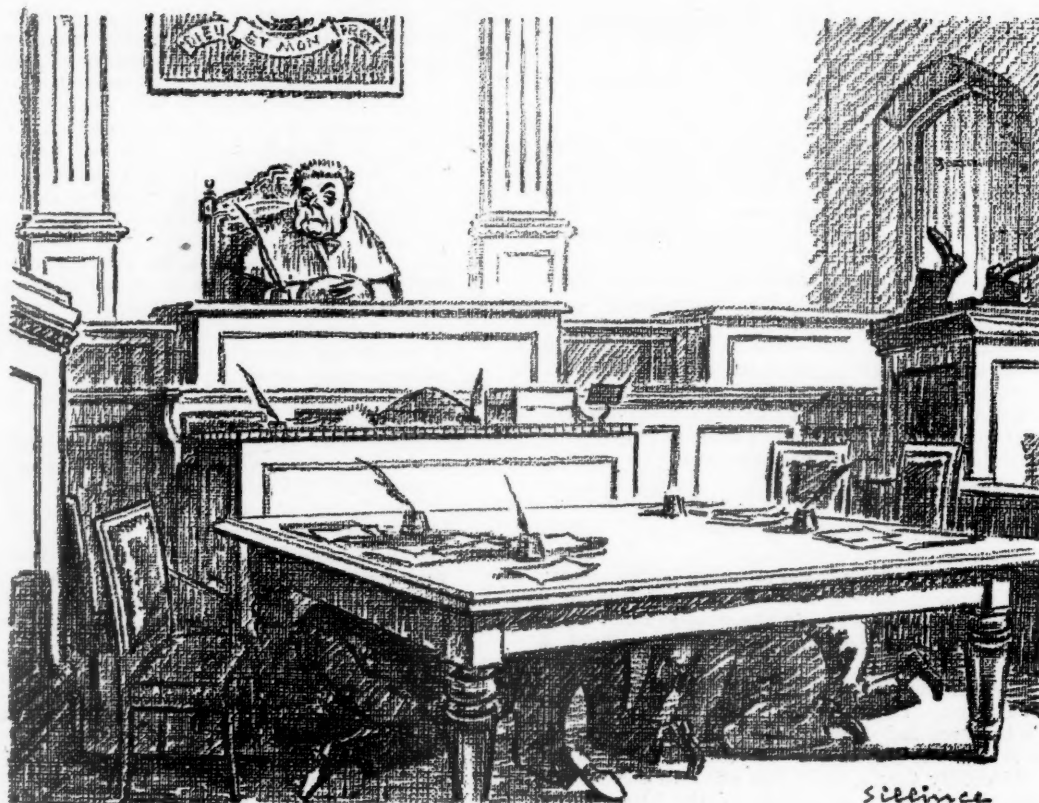
GUIDE. This tour was advertised as half price, so of course you get half a tour.

DRIVER. Trespassers will be prosecuted for conduct likely to lead to a breach of the peace.

FINIS



"Pity you weren't here a week earlier."



"... and what is a doodle-bug?"

Heritage

[“Black Watch in action eleven hours to-day. Severe casualties inflicted on enemy. Own killed two officers, twenty-four men. Details later.”—*Chindit Official Telegram.*]

ANOTHER field is fought; a little fight
 Not to be famed in chronicles of war,
 Not to be noticed in the News to-night
 Nor cabled eagerly to lands afar.
 Only upon the regimental scrolls
 Begun long since, the day of Fontenoy,
 Among old skirmishes and lost patrols
 They will record to-night this latest ploy.

Now, where to-day the sun blazed overhead,
 In the cool evening moving to and fro
 Their comrades bury the immortal dead
 Forever from the sight of friend and foe.
 And round them in the darkness sentries stand
 And watch with tired eyes and straining ears,
 Even as long ago in our old land
 Their weary kinsfolk leaned upon their spears.

In old wild days, if one should chance to fall,
 The son caught up the broadsword of the slain,
 Girt on the dirk and the accoutrements all
 And saw to it the ranks were whole again;

So now, as sure as when in ancient days
 Brave youth espoused the patriarchal feud,
 Still, in the fashion of our modern ways,
 The oath of Aberfeldy is renewed.

We know not yet the comrades who are down,
 Who are the two and who the twenty-four
 That shall not see again the country town,
 The pithead or the cothouse or the moor,
 From whence they came to fill their fathers' place,
 To keep the long heroic line unbroke,
 The seed, the fruit, the harvest of their race,
 The latest warriors of a fighting folk.

From such small battles was a kingdom built,
 By such bold forays was a border held,
 By men in hodden gray or tattered kilt
 Who knew defeat, but knew not to be quelled;
 And they that fell to-day were of a blood
 That cannot all be drunk by greedy earth,
 And whoso fell in honour where he stood
 Fulfilled the purpose of his warrior birth.



MRS. PARTINGTON AND THE BREAKERS

[“The times of our sweeping successes lie far behind us.”—*German Military Commentator.*]

The Poetry of Andrew Jessiman

OF course I hadn't the remotest suspicion when I engaged him that Jessiman was a poet. How could I, after all? My personal experience of poets is so limited; it boils down, to be exact, to one fast-fading glimpse of W. B. Yeats in the 1920s. He was intoning "The Fiddler of Dooney" from a Presbyterian pulpit, his air was apologetic and his tie was extremely crooked. So I had really very little to go on. Besides, jobbing gardeners do not as a rule hold communion with Apollo, and Jessiman seemed to me nothing more or less than a good average specimen of his kind. Like his confrères he came late and went early; he was garrulous, unreliable and self-opinionated. One individual trait I could not help observing as time wore on—his tendency to fall into prolonged trances in the shrubbery. I belong, no doubt, to the class of persons described by Jessiman himself as "awfu' low-minded," for I at once attributed this practice to congenital laziness on his part; the notion of poetic travailings never entered my head.

In any case I was for a while too absorbed in his prose. "Oh, sae ye want it kin' o' curved, do ye?" he remarked on his first morning as we were discussing a new flower-bed, "Oh, I see . . . An oablong would be more artistic, mind ye, at the p'int where ye're puttin' it. But it's your gairden, Miss, no' mine's. . . . Aye, ye must please yersel'. . . . Fro' here, did ye say?" He paced about on those consequential little bandy legs of his. "Well, I'll tell ye whit I'll do—that's if ye insist, an' it's your gairden when a' is said and done—I'll tell ye whit I'll do. . . . I'll hoop ye back here—aye, that's it. . . ." More consequential pacyings. "An' hauf-moon ye fro' here tae yonder . . . Aye. A' the same, if I was in your shoes I would have an oablong. . . ." I need scarcely add that I finished up with an oblong. Even at that early stage Jessiman managed to get his own way.

But his verbs were delicious. I was hardly aware at first that they signified nothing. He would talk, for instance, about "scurrifyin'" the paths when he intended to clear them of weeds. Which, incidentally, he never did. At the end of a day too he would sometimes produce that implement which he calls a Dutch How and make a mighty flourish in the air and cry out "Watch me skelpin' roun' the herbaceous wi' this in the mornin', Miss!"

And I watched, but never a skelp did I see.

And he was always going to dig a sheugh, whatever that is. "Peety," he would say, indicating with the stem of his pipe some wilting rose-bush—"Peety I haveny had time to dig a sheugh roun' that the day—too many ither wee jobs. . . . If I was you, Miss, I would do it afore bedtime—that's if ye want to save yer tree. It's no' ma tree, of course, but I would strongly advise ye . . . aye, an' ye'll sleep a' the better for the exercise. . . . Aye, dig ye yer sheugh an' slap a quarter pun' o' yon bonemeal inty it richt away—or no, wait a minute. Blood manure, that's the thing it needs. Jist dig yer sheugh, see? It'll no' take ye that long, an' sprinkle in yer blood—don't shoot it in, mind, take it canny—sprinkle in yer blood an' there ye are. . . ."

There came a moment, however—it was on a lovely June afternoon—when it dawned on me that it was I who was doing most of the scurrifyin' and sprinkling and skelping; in that moment I felt that I had had quite enough of Jessiman's prose. Jessiman, who has his own acuteness, must have felt it too. He awoke from his trance the moment I appeared, gave me one look out of his bibulous old eye and turned on the poetic tap at once. "The gowans was openin' their bonnie wee eyes," said Jessiman, emerging from behind the rowan tree with the Dutch How under his arm—



"And what will you have to taper off, Sir?"

"The larks was singin' high up in the skies,
The roses was sheddin' their beautiful smells,
An' the breezes was ringin' the Canterbury bells.
Every bum bee was hummin' among the bright flowers,
An' the butterflies was flittin' the golden hours,
An' the leaves o' the trees was a' dancin' away,
An' the farmers was busy makin' the hay,
An' the bonnie wee . . ."

I had to stop him; he would have gone on for ever. "Jessiman," I exclaimed, "are you making that up as you go along?"

"When I'm in the tid o' it," answered Jessiman, and he handed me the How in an absent-minded way—"when I'm in the proper tid I can make up any amount o' po'try. It fair gushes oot o' me."

I gazed at him with respect, I inquired into the subjects of his predilection.

"Nature first of all," said Jessiman firmly. "That's only to be expeckit, seein' whit ma work is. But I like a wee bit comment on the world tae. I produce a fair amount o' sarcastic stuff. Now, there's one I made up about Peter Hay. He's the fella that drives the laundry van; he's a' sweet an' smilin' . . . Oh, jist a richt Pharisee. Would ye care to hear it?"

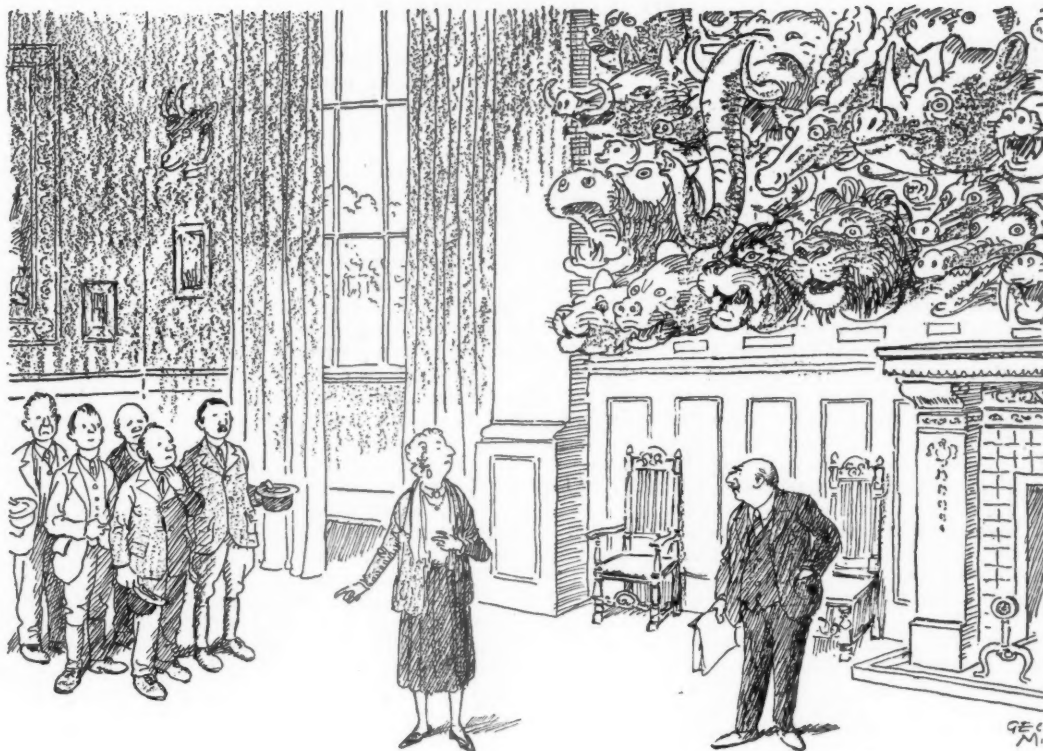
I gave him back the How and said I would.

"It's a Stinger, mind you," Jessiman cautioned me, "a fair Stinger. They said doon at the Appoch Arms it was the best thing I iver done. . . . Wait till I see if I can mind it. . . . 'Twas on a Tuesday mornin' . . . aye, that's it . . ." He handed me the How and struck an attitude.

"'Twas on a Tuesday mornin' as I went doon oor street,
I saw a chap across the road an' he his horse did beat.
He is a chap I ken quite well,
Though only for to see,
For bein' perjink an' proper, forbye a strict T.T.
He has nae time for me.

But I gaed across an' looked at him an' cried him for a sham,
I said 'I'm no' a holy Willie an' I can tak' ma dram' . . .

"Between you an' I that's true



"A deputation from the Council, dear. They want you to organize a 'Rat Extermination' week."

enough," said Jessiman, breaking off at this point. "It's no' jist for the rhyme. I'm no' that kind of pote. . . Let's see now if I can mind the rest of it. . ."

"I can tak' ma dram . . . I can tak' ma dram . . ."

But Jessiman couldn't mind the rest. Still, I had heard enough, he said, to understand that rhythm was his strong point . . . Sweep, aye, he had sweep . . . But on the whole he preferred his Nature pieces. Nature put him in the tid like nothing else. Would I like to hear one he made up about the bonnie wee burn singin' in the sun?

I held the How for the rest of the afternoon. And late in the evening Jessiman returned with a twopenny exercise book which held, he informed me, some of his best work. He was willing to lend it for one night only, it was much in demand among his clientele. The spelling was not perfect, he said in conclusion, but as long as the sweep was there . . .

Jessiman's exercise, which bore on its white label the legend "Andrew

AN Officer in charge of a Com-forts Depot to whom we have been able to send supplies of our wool writes:

"In a letter it is difficult for me adequately to express my gratitude for the valuable help you give us, thus enabling further supplies of knitted comforts to be dispatched to the soldiers overseas.

"I wish I were in the position to be able to thank personally all the supporters of your Fund, for I am most grateful for this aid to our work."

We also tender our thanks to all Subscribers, and in doing so beg them to continue their most valuable help by sending donations which will be gratefully received and acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie St., London, E.C.4.

Registered under the War Charities Act, 1940

Jessiman, Peot," was disappointing. Its pages were somewhat monotonously concerned with birdies and roses and gowans and bum bees, and the adjective "bonnie" was overworked. But there was one rather promising fragment entitled "Wee Gracie. R.I.P.":

"They laide the wee lamb beneath the moald

It was it seams a niglekit cold
Nae wunder then it makes me sick
To see her mither pented thick
An a her nales jist bleedin red
Wi skinin rabbits youd ha said
An her twa lips . . ."

And there, tantalizingly, the thing breaks off. What a pity! Just as it was developing into a lovely Stinger.

But poetry is expensive; I'm afraid I shall have to get rid of Jessiman. It grieves me to the heart, because he's busy at the moment on a poem dealing with the present state of Europe. I gather it's to be of an epic nature, but so far I have been favoured with only the opening couplet:

"It must cause Adolf awfu pain
To see his Nazties ower the Sane . . ."

So Did Rumania

MY friend Hocksquabble greeted my assertion with maddening indifference.

"How do you know it was the man?" he said. "Look," I said patiently. "It was at Harrow-on-the-Hill station last Sunday morning and he was sitting on a seat on the platform, and my train stopped so that I was looking out of the window directly opposite him. I could see him as plainly as I see you. We used to call him Bill."

"I dare say you did," said Hocksquabble, as if this were only to be expected. "But it still seems to me quite possible that you made a mistake."

"Why *should* I have made a mistake? Don't you see in the papers every day reports of brothers and people who haven't seen each other for thirty years suddenly meeting in the Strand or the Sahara or somewhere? Why shouldn't I see a man who was just in my squad only two years ago? I've been out of the Army sixteen or seventeen months and this is the first time I've set eyes on anyone I used to know in it. Do you want me to go through life never—"

"No, no," Hocksquabble interrupted soothingly. "All I want to draw your attention to is the odds."

"What have the odds got to do with it? I tell you I recognized this chap. It's a fact. The odds against any coincidence must be considerable, but they happen all the time. You talk as if long odds were a certificate of impossibility."

"You've got to admit that the longer they are the nearer they approach one," said Hocksquabble.

We thought about odds. An infantry captain with a big flat head, thick hair and a very hollow back walked past; he held his wide mouth half open as if he were saying "Eh" and walked planting each foot deliberately in turn like an indicator. Hocksquabble pointed a finger at his back and said "And then there's the mere chance of resemblance. I dare say you knew a man who looked something like that."

"No officer I ever knew looked at all like that."

"Exactly," said Hocksquabble, as if he had proved something. I took a deep breath and tried again.

"The point is," I said, "I recognized this man Bill. I am perfectly familiar with his appearance, I saw him and spoke to him probably every day between August 12 1942 and February 1 1943, and this last Sunday I recognized him."

"Any corroborative evidence?" said Hocksquabble, suddenly deciding to be brisk.

"Well," I began, "for one thing he's still in the Royal Artillery."

"There are quite a lot of men in the—"

"Don't give me that!"

Hocksquabble waved a hand. "What about his divisional sign?"

"I couldn't quite see it, he was—"

"Ah!" said Hocksquabble.

"But on the other hand," I said, "whatever it was it wouldn't have made the slightest difference, because when I last saw him none of us had any divisional sign. We were all waiting to be posted . . . Come to think of it," I added incautiously, "I didn't notice his flags either."

"What flags?"

"The crossed-flags arm badge. We were all signallers."

He raised his eyebrows. "There you are then. You admit it. Isn't that another point against—"

"Wait a minute though," I said suddenly. "I remember now. He *didn't* classify as a signaller. He was one of

those chaps that can't get the hang of lamp-reading. They gave him two or three chances, but he was one of the only two in the squad that—"

"So no flags?"

"No."

"Chevrons?"

"Now that is a point, I admit. He had *three* red chevrons."

"And why shouldn't he have had?" Hocksquabble demanded unexpectedly.

"Because so far as I know he was called up when I was," I said. "July 2 1942 was the date of our enlistment. How could he work the excuse for three chevrons out of a service of two years and two months?"

"You never know. What sort of a man was he?"

"I don't think he'd have done exactly that."

"You can't tell. Suppose he'd had something to do with the issuing of chevrons and there was a spare one. Was he the sort of chap that—"

"I don't think—"

"You don't *think*," said Hocksquabble, his manner growing progressively more barristerial. "But can you be sure? Where did this Bill come from?"

"Oh, he was a Londoner all right."

"There you are! What more likely than that he should be at Harrow-on-the-Hill station on the last Sunday morning of his leave, waiting for a train connection to take him out to the country? You don't deny that he would probably have to change at Harrow-on-the-Hill?"

"Well—"

"Doesn't he *deserve* a little treat on his leave, bless my soul?"

"Of course, but—"

"Why it's perfectly obvious it's the same man," said Hocksquabble.

After a pause I said, "Look here, you started by being on the other side."

"Oh, well," said Hocksquabble. "So did Rumania."

R. M.

Staff Appointment

Lines on a Prospect not so distant but still slightly dubious

FIVE years have left us still the sport
Of these uncomfortable wars
Holding the unaccustomed fort
With few but with how splendid chars.

Weary the uphill road. But stay!
What golden dawn begins to rise?
It is the proud, the wished-for day
When women's corps demobilize.

Write "Welcome" on our dusty mats:
Hang banners on each cobwebbed wall!
What simple Private of the Ats
Steps forth to be our General?

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

Dumbarton Hoax

(From our Special Correspondent)

DUMBARTON Oaks is a great improvement on Bretton Woods. The undergrowth is lighter, less oppressive; there is something of the savanna about the place. It is almost impossible to see the wood for the treaties.

Accommodation here is hopelessly inadequate. Two hundred and seventy-three reporters are housed in a single colonnade of *Quercus pedunculata*. Topmost branches are fetching anything from five to fifteen dollars a night, and even the tiniest basements among the roots are being eagerly snapped up at two and three dollars. The local authority has prepared for the conference very thoroughly. Tree-felling operations have been conducted energetically throughout the summer and rents have risen accordingly.

The conference itself is being held behind closed doors fashioned from the exotic timbers of the East and lined on both sides with asbestos, baize and cobalt steel. After every session these doors are swung open and the massed correspondents surge forward to reconstruct, as best they can, the historic events of the day. When the windows are opened dense fumes and clouds of tobacco smoke (Virginian, Turkish and Lease-Lend) roll out to the oak forest. Pilots have reported that huge columns of smoke have been seen as far away as thirty miles.

One finds occasionally a half-eaten sandwich or the fragments of a shattered tumbler. There may be signs of the desperate struggles that sometimes take place—with schedules and amendments scattered all over the floor and on top of the piano.

Last Tuesday was a red-letter day. I managed to seize Sir Wilnot



"I still maintain that it's YOU who are out of step!"

Crawley's blotter under the very noses of the G-men. A photostat copy is reproduced here.

In the afternoon I saw Sir Eugene Fastness carving his initials on a dwarf oak with a penknife marked "M.O.I." I noticed that he is left-handed.

The news that a rocket site has been discovered in Normandy with its nose pointing directly to the United States has naturally caused great excitement. At first it was thought that the conference would be evacuated to Normandy but no move has yet been made. Calculations by Professor O. Albert-Ross have demonstrated that the V.2 missiles would land somewhere between Narratucket on the coast and Mutte in the Rockies. For weeks, now, this new bomb-alley has cashed in on its publicity. Newspaper sales have soared and subscription lists have been opened for the potential victims of looting. Adamsville (Mass.) has been

renamed Doodleville. It has become a holiday resort overnight.

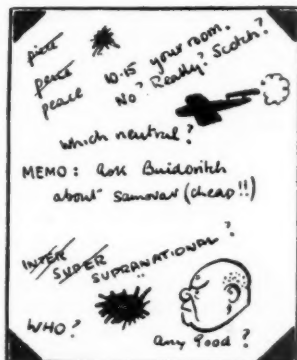
There is some talk of the resuscitation of the old League of Nations. The British Mission, I learn, favours the three-decker system, with promotion and relegation to be decided on points, and sanctions imposed against any country playing an ineligible representative.

While it is being freely suggested that the war will end before Christmas everybody is hoping that the peace treaty will take some years to settle. But don't ask me why, please.

Check

"Chess is a game of skill, played by two four smaller squares of equal size, coloured persons on a square board divided into sixty-alternately light and dark."

First sentence of a booklet on Chess.



At the Play

"TO-MORROW THE WORLD"
(ALDWYCH)

MESSRS. JAMES GOW and ARNAUD D'USSEAU, American dramatists, have borrowed their not immediately expressive title from the swaggering Nazi song which boasts (oddly now) "To-day We Rule Germany, To-Morrow The World." Undoubtedly, young *Emil Bruckner*, who has been brought up in this belief, is quite the most dreadful child the stage has ever known. There have been Awful Children before, both golden lads and girls—Pollyanna, all sweetness and light, was one of them—but *Emil* strides out many lengths ahead of the field. One day this play about him may be a valued period piece.

We are to assume that when *Emil's* father, a liberal-minded scientist and a Nobel Prizewinner, is foully murdered at Dachau, the Nazis take the small boy to train him in the principles of the Master Race. Thus he learns to hate his father's memory; he is taught the usual racial farrago; relentlessly he is moulded into a conventional member of the Hitler Youth, the schoolroom's New Order. When, in 1942, he comes under an "exchange" agreement to his American uncle's Middle Western home, the *Frame* family finds that it is harbouring a twelve-year-old storm-trooper. With *Emil* as a pattern, well might one say of the Third Reich:

The children born of thee are
sword and fire,
Red ruin, and the breaking up of
laws.

To this depraved child all Americans, except the Sioux Indians, are degenerate. As he sees it, his mission in the Middle West is merely to work for his Fuehrer: *Deutschland, Deutschland, über alles*: a Nazi *Emil* over the American defectives. He appears in full uniform, swastika on sleeve; he slashes his father's portrait; he brags, lies, and bullies; he insults the brilliant Jewish girl *Leona* who is to be both his teacher and his uncle's second wife; he seeks to "collaborate," at first unsuccessfully with a German maid, and later more successfully with a blustering German-American; and he attempts to steal the keys of his uncle's experimental laboratory. When he is seen at the work by his young cousin *Patricia* he tries, according to the best Nazi text-books, to murder her with the nearest blunt instrument—a brass book-end.

So far, so bad. But this is a play and the third act is to come. We are shown at last how the Master Race is—temporarily—conquered, and how, after a ten days' campaign during which he is nearly throttled by his uncle, the Nordic superman dwindles all at once into a bewildered penitent, no longer a ruthless gangster but a tired and unhappy child. How long the reformation will last it is hard to say: *Emil* has been for so long in the shades of the prison-house that he may not fully escape. One would like to prescribe for him several weeks in the company of a small select committee headed by Tom Sawyer, Penrod and Young Macduff.

Although this fable or cautionary tale is frankly a piece of playmaking, it is made well enough to hold the attention. One watches *Emil's* progress with the fascinated horror reserved for the nastier type of cockroach. He may become a worthier child later on, but he will be much less absorbing in the theatre. At the Aldwych Master DAVID O'BRIEN gives a performance remarkable for its spirit and intelligence: he manages to render credible this warped and totally humourless boy who works on the Nazi principle of Jonas Chuzzlewit: "Do other men, for they would do you." His success on the first night was shared by another young player, Miss ANGELA GLYNNE. She has a simpler task as *Patricia*, a junior Miss who would probably be insufferable in the home but who can keep the party going on the stage.

The other people in the household are little more than a frame for the children. Mr. ROBERT HARRIS's fine voice adds distinction to *Uncle Michael*, the Middle Western professor who unwittingly harbours a goblin child; Miss ELIZABETH ALLAN must be one of the most decorative school-teachers in the States; and Miss JEAN CADELL does wonders with the rather perfunctorily-written part of *Michael's* jealous and possessive sister who is almost deceived by the juvenile desperado.

There remain Miss LILLY KANN and Mr. JULIEN MITCHELL. Miss KANN, whom we saw last as the Mother Superior in *The Cradle Song*, now brings her warmth and sympathy to a lovely performance of the German maid *Frieda*. (Unfairly, the authors do not let us know what *Frieda* said when she was told that *Emil* would be remaining in the house). Mr. MITCHELL, in a small part, has an effective false heartiness as a potential "collaborator"—the janitor of the local university or, as he prefers to be called, the Superintendent of Works and Maintenance.

We leave him gloomy in the prospect of an inquisition by the F.B.I., familiar enough initials which here, apparently, mean the Federal Bureau of Investigation.
J. C. T.

On Haworth Moor

I WAS seated on a patch of green-sward among a large area of heather. An hour before I had left the Black Bull, passed the Brontë Parsonage, turned left by the Yorkshire Penny Bank, and then, following the road for a stretch, had branched on to the moor. The heather had been difficult to negotiate, but I had lifted my knees very high and plodded on doggedly, determined to be alone for a while. As I unwrapped my sandwiches I began to sentimentalize. I was here at last: on the actual scene. I told myself that perhaps on this very spot Emily conceived Heathcliff, Cathy Earnshaw and the rest. No doubt the moor was more sullen and glowering at the time, for on this particular afternoon the sky was blue and the sun shining deliciously. There was cheese in the sandwiches, the contemporary variety that tastes so much like solidified daylight. Possibly it was as well; the old-time Stilton or Gorgonzola in that gracious surround would have proffered too much ecstasy. I took a bite and at the same time the heather began to move strangely a short distance away. There was a slight wavering effect similar to that in a film when a girl in rags turns to a princess before your eyes, and the result was a sheep. It was hobbled but well able to approach to within thirty inches of the sandwich I held. From that distance it just stared.

In a moment of aberration I gave it a piece. It was a mistake, for this transpired to be no selfish sheep. It wanted all to participate and it gave the clarion call. Soon sheep appeared to be arriving from all over the moor. There were shorn sheep, unshorn ones prolifically twig-hung, some with blue marks on their backs and others with red, and an elderly aunt who looked as though she had hurriedly drawn on her marabout before proceeding to investigate the cause of the upset. With a few gentle baas they all stood expectantly several yards away. I decided not to be blackmailed. After all, we were at war. If people had been fined for scattering crumbs to the birds, then giving bread-and-cheese to sheep constituted a greater social offence. So I defiantly ate the sandwiches



"The laundry says there's not a chance of the washing coming back by Saturday unless I'm prepared to go there and work part-time."

myself. In a sense it was my second mistake since, upon realizing that they were not to share, the entire number began bleating piteously. I scarcely knew what to do and commenced feeling slightly intimidated, as I thought that if the farmer heard the noise he might imagine that at least one member of the public was taking violent action in an attempt to vary the present-day pork issue. I did clap my hands explosively, but this only caused the sheep to heighten the tone of the dirge. I looked round and saw that more had gathered behind me. In an attempt to prove to them that the sandwiches were finished I displayed the empty paper, ostentatiously folded and put it in my pocket and actually called "No more. Sandwiches all gone!" as though I had been talking to a foreigner whose language I did not know. But the sheep were slow on the uptake and my actions only caused the uproar to amplify. I decided to try to

escape. I stood up in the middle of a lake of sheep, feeling momentarily as though I should have been carrying a crook and wearing a Scotch bonnet. I was wondering what steps to take when a small group appeared below. Paterfamilias carried an attaché-case. He chose a spot to set it down, the family seated itself and I saw a tablecloth flutter in the air. Almost immediately my first visitor, the path-finding sheep, departed. In a minute or so his call came and the flock departed. Next I heard someone below hoarsely wishing that little Tommy had been permitted to fetch his air-gun. As I passed from view the last thing I saw was the head of the family frantically hurling his sun-hat at the sheep in an attempt to gain a little space.

I toiled upward, my knees almost touching my chin, for the heather here was in larger clumps. Each one was slippery too, and several times when I thought that I had a secure purchase

the sole of my shoe skidded, with the result that once I bit my tongue and on another occasion I fell and disappeared altogether in the heather. At last I reached the ridge and saw a path beneath. I floundered towards it. It was sanctuary. I came to it with a greater admiration than ever for Emily Brontë.

For it was she who had drawn me to the place. She was an immensely reserved young woman who had formed her own conception of the stark verities and thenceforward permitted nothing to qualify her findings. She wrote one of the greatest English novels. And she was inspired by the background I now trod. "My sister Emily loved the moor," wrote Charlotte. Undoubtedly she was right. Emily was a remarkable woman although, even if the sheep were not there at the time, I wonder yet how she circumvented that heather, especially in skirts reaching to the ground.



"You're the new governess, I suppose?"

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

The Maritains

IN *We Have Been Young Together* (Translated by JULIE KERNAN, LONGMANS, GREEN, 15/-) Madame RAÏSSA MARITAIN, wife of the well-known Catholic apologist, has made an interesting and valuable contribution to the history of the Catholic revival in France at the beginning of this century. While RAÏSSA was still a child her parents, Russian Jews, moved to Paris, wishing their children to have the best possible education, in an atmosphere free from racial and religious prejudices. RAÏSSA was a model pupil, and if the teacher had to be absent was put in charge of the class, on whose conduct she would present a report when the teacher came back. She quotes one of these reports, which seems to reveal that sense of demarcation sometimes perceptible in Catholic converts—"They were all naughty; I alone was well-behaved." At home she met many political refugees from Russia. Their dogmatic atheism depressed her, and when she went to the Sorbonne she found the professors aridly averse from any speculation which bordered on the mystical. Then she met her future husband, Jacques Maritain, who like herself was looking for "some true light on existence." Together they attended the lectures of Henri Bergson, and learnt from him that "through intuition we may attain to the absolute." But they needed warmth as well as light, and found it in Léon Bloy. Madame MARITAIN's portrait of this fiery Catholic apologist is very moving. Although he had his admirers, and one of his books was ranked with *King Lear* by Maeterlinck, he lived in extreme poverty with his wife and children, two of whom had succumbed after years of semi-starvation. The enthusiasm for his work of the youthful Maritains greatly comforted the old man, to whom they introduced themselves with a gift of twenty-five francs, which reached him on a morning

when he had borrowed a small sum from his barber to get food for his family. Under the influence of Léon Bloy they joined the Catholic Church, convinced by his example that a simple and intellectually sincere and outspoken life was possible in the Church. Madame MARITAIN, who brings her story down to 1909, describes other Catholic friends of this period, notably the poet Charles Péguy, who could not bear Léon Bloy, and the painter Rouault, whom Léon Bloy could not bear. These dissonances are softened in Madame MARITAIN's narrative, which was written after the fall of France, and glows with tenderness for the Paris of her youth—"oh symbol of beauty, oh monument of Christendom!" H. K.

Fire on the Earth

There seem to be only two methods of approach to the understanding of the universe, apart from the scientific method which has reached so uncomfortable a dead end. The poetic and the religious techniques are in many respects similar, but their ends have been allowed to diverge so widely that the combined service of God and the Muse has become suspect in either camp. The poet, however, is beginning to resume both the discipline and the graces of his prophetic office, and both concur to give Miss EDITH SITWELL's *Green Song* (MACMILLAN, 5/-) an impressive distinction of bearing and clarity of outlook. One theme, emphasized by recurrent refrains, pervades most of her sixteen lyrics: the human spring that is to know no summer, and the impotence of age, the onlooker, bound like Ixion to the "broken wheel of the world." Yet above and below this vision of ruin the poet, fixed, as Dante says of his elect, "like a candle in a candlestick," illuminates an earth and a heaven toiling at the work of redemption. "Long Lethe River" shall flow "over Gomorrah's city" and the "ripe-bearded fire of wheat" break out like a Pentecostal flame in whose rushing wind comes the God of the Burning Bush and of the Bread of Angels. H. P. E.

"Caddie, My Number Eight!"

I have often thought it would be a nice idea if a Hall of Memory could be inaugurated, and paid for by the publishers, where the victims of ghoul-novelists and the details of their ends could be recorded. Not only has the time come for some public tribute to those innocents heartlessly done to death for gain, but it would be useful to authors themselves to have a central record, backed by a good filing-system and a curator in a morning-coat, where it would be possible to discover if poisoned wheelks had already occurred to the evil imagination of another. Miss AGATHA CHRISTIE's latest victim, for example, would be commemorated like this:

"CAMILLA
WIDOW OF SIR MATTHEW TRESSILIAN
OF GULL'S POINT, SALT-CREEK.
FATALLY SLICED WITH A NIBLICK
IN HER OWN BED.
(Towards Zero. COLLINS, 7/6.)"

For details of the crime, and of who did it, application would be made to the curator. In the meantime I advise you to go to this book itself, whose theme is that what leads up to a murder is of much greater significance than the event. The manner is Mrs. CHRISTIE's film technique of sharply-cut dramatic episodes. A devilishly ingenious plot qualifies for one of those second readings in which you kick yourself blue at the number of fair chances flung away. E. O. D. K.

Chinese Wonderland

The range of the romantic writer is enlarged, as St. Evremond aptly put it, by the *clarté des anges* and the *sens des simples animaux*. That perhaps is why the child, who is more obviously compounded of angel and animal than the man, has had his outlook shared by great romantics like Hans Andersen; and why Mr. HSLAO CH'EN, who is himself a romantic of the true Hans Andersen breed, elects, in the best of the short stories he has so exquisitely translated from his own Chinese, to see his horrid world of 1931-37 through the eyes of a child. "A Rainy Evening," for instance, tells how a small boy, sheltering from a storm in a field hut, stumbles upon an act of *King Lear* in miniature. "Under the Fence of Others" and "When Your Eaves are Low" show children suffering from the break-up of their homes. "Chestnuts" and "The Philatelist" show bigger boys and girls suffering from the break-up of their country. The titular story, *The Spinners of Silk* (ALLEN AND UNWIN, 6/-), is the least happy of a memorable dozen. It reads like a parody of the rest, and one is reminded that the tendency to caricature one's own sensibility is one to which the romantic, of all writers, is most dangerously exposed.

H. P. E.

Mr. D. W. Brogan's America

Character studies of nations are much in demand during the present period of inflamed national self-consciousness. Most of them make tedious reading, and one need not be unduly pessimistic to believe that even the best of them will not to any perceptible extent sweeten international relations, or in any ascertainable degree help the future to differ from the past. However, if they must continue to appear it would be a good thing if as many as possible came from the pen of Mr. D. W. BROGAN. His studies of France and England were witty and perceptive, and his enthusiasm for the United States makes *The American Problem* (HAMISH HAMILTON, 10/6) even more stimulating to read. His account of the settlement of the United States is particularly brilliant. A great deal of hard work and imagination has gone into this brief and lucid narrative of a vast and confused process. But his enthusiasm for the States is frequently in conflict with his knowledge. The Declaration of Independence may not be able, he says, "to stand strict, historical examination." Nevertheless, the passion for freedom and equality enshrined in it must, he holds, put "a limit to the possibilities of mere *Realpolitik* as a possible American policy." Yet the Jewish and Negro problems, the treatment of the defeated South, and other instances, set forth by Mr. BROGAN himself, show that for Americans as for the rest of mankind a declaration of general principles has small effect in particular instances.

H. K.

A Poet with a Gun

Many poets have wielded other implements than the pen, for instance dear Clare's plough and the scalpel of John Keats: Lord DUNSANY in his new book *While the Sirens Slept* (JARROLD, 10/6) makes it clear that his is the gun. In this autobiography, covering the years from the first chapter of the World War till about 1929, he tells of journeys to Scotland, to the desert, to India, all producing two things—poetry and "heads," generally rather more of the latter than the former. Big-game enthusiasts will find the list of kills (ranging from that strangely named beast Mrs. Grey to the "brown-coloured animal of the cat tribe" half-way in size between pussy and a panther) exciting, but to the ordinary reader they make a little too much of an account and too little of a narrative. Apart

from this Lord DUNSANY has many lovely descriptions of scenery and many interesting things to say: on lecturing in America; on the importance of reading your own play to the cast; on flocks of pigeons in Rampur which drill at the waving of a white cloth; and fifty other topics. Besides this there are such illuminating aphorisms as "Where reason ends and before madness begins there is a brilliant space illuminated by humour." His travels have been the real thing, with real difficulties calmly faced. B. E. S.

White Man's Burden

Mr. DOUGLAS BAILEY's book, *We Built and Destroyed* (HURST AND BLACKETT, 10/6), is a very vivid account of the fall of Malaya and Singapore by a young engineer who went through it a very short time after his arrival to fill a post under the Malayan Public Works Service. In a modest introduction he explains that the book is not intended for travellers or for those who have lived and worked in the East, and that the impressions are merely those of a civilian observer. Nevertheless, this particular observer was a hard worker with very seeing eyes and a sense of responsibility and conduct to the people—"strange and brown or yellow and black, all eyeing him with that challenging stare which implies 'You are a White Man'." He says a good deal about "P.W.R." (Prestige of the White Races), dislikes the code that bars the Eurasian from privilege, thinks our women do not always behave prettily, suggests that critics who refer to those two dreadful months in Malaya as "a blot on our history" should look at the map and remember Britain's danger at the same period, and ends up triumphantly—"No matter how long it takes or how much it costs, we must go down on our knees and build again."

B. E. B.



"Had a marvellous holiday, old man—you'd never guess where I've been."



"Careful! You ain't drivin' the General now!"

Stonking Times

I SHOULD not like to think that the *Punch* volumes for World War II contained no mention of the stonking types who helped to win it (hoping for a world fit for Stonkers to stonk in) and of the stonking times they had. So I am going to place on record a few facts about Stonkers.

In our own particular mess I suppose the best example of a thorough-going stonking type is Doc Green. The Doc is a very conscientious and efficient M.O., and we are all sure that he would never let a patient die unless absolutely necessary. However, if one of us takes a pain to him in the mess he usually says after a cursory examination that gangrene will develop in three days, and asks "What about having a stonking party?" It is a prerequisite of Stonkers that they should be efficient and diligent officers when on duty, but pure Stonkers when off.

Doc Green has a broken nose. He broke it several times, playing Rugby, and finally had it boned by a friend. This makes it a very mobile nose, and

sometimes when we are a little blue he cheers us up by pressing a huge finger on it and smearing it about all over his face. The Doc likes singing. He doesn't mind what he sings, or whether he has any accompaniment or not. He has had no accompaniment recently, because at a stonking party in the autumn he performed an operation on the mess piano with the poker and coal-tongs, taking away a lot of dead wood from the wall of its stomach. This wood lies on the top of the piano now, and is dusted and put back every day by the mess servants.

The Doc likes dancing too; especially by himself, when he is free to writhe his wrists and fingers in peculiar snaky patterns. He is lucky in having thumbs which turn right back, and fingers which he can crack at the joints over and over again, without having to wait for them to recover. He is a very good shove-halfpenny player and is the inventor of a cocktail called "Ox-blood."

He can also cross one eye and

simultaneously roll the other, though I knew him a long time before he even bothered to do this. He wears very strong glasses and laughs most of the time.

Well, that is just an example. Another Stonker is S. S. Browne. He has only been here three weeks, but it is doubtful whether anybody has ever been elected a Stonker so quickly. He seemed a possible as soon as he told us to call him "Steamer," and when on Guest night he went out and gathered a huge bouquet of twigs, grass and weeds and presented it to the C.O.'s wife while the C.O. was making an informal speech, we knew his election was inevitable. It was Steamer who showed us how to imitate machine-gun fire by vibrating knives on the edge of the table during meals. He can also jump over three big leather chairs in a row, laughing all the time in a sharp, corncrakey voice. He is usually laughing, anyway, even when he isn't jumping over chairs, and even when he isn't laughing he will always laugh as

soon as you look at him. One day he got to the mess early for tea and tore all the newspapers apart at the fold, and sat watching all the senior officers' faces as they found out. He has brought to us the prescription for a cocktail called "Steamer's Special."

But it is useless to go on describing individual Stonkers. Stonkers only really exist, as such, in groups or parties. Even two Stonkers, though glad to meet one another, can't expect to get any serious stonking done. That is why a good stonking party is really their only satisfactory medium of expression. When you get a King-Stonker like Doc Green in a small room with six or seven other Stonkers and a piano, then you have the real atmosphere.

Take the famous Cocoa Party, for example, in Shorty Porter's room, when Haunch Vinnison took all the drawers out of the chest-of-drawers and stood in them and kicked the sides out. Everybody sang, the coal-scuttle was thrown on top of the wardrobe, and we finished up with the Doc cutting all our ties off at the knot with a pair of surgical scissors. It was called the Cocoa Party because Fats Whibble punched holes in a tin of cocoa and sprinkled everybody with it. Shorty thought it would be better if the cocoa were made first, so that it could be splashed direct from a cup, and everyone agreed to this. It would have been a bad thing for any decent uniform, but Stonkers normally have very old uniforms, too far gone to make a bit of cocoa important. For instance, Doc Green's uniform is partly made from one given him by a friend, and he sometimes squints down at his collar and observes that his friend's trousers are wearing very well.

(When Doc Green was at Cambridge he was leader of a society which planned to dynamite all the bridges on the Cam. They had the dynamite, and everything, but someone persuaded them out of the idea at the last minute. This is probably the only reason why the Doc was not sent down from Cambridge.)

Stonkers are quite intelligent, and they know that they are being Stonkers. They have very good manners, but they very much enjoy laughing and singing.

Some of the best of our Stonkers were responsible for the artichoke joke. We had a tremendous crop of seven-foot-high young artichokes, with paths through them. The Stonkers transplanted artichokes all over the paths one night during a Mess dance so that officers wandered about for hours trying to find their way to their

quarters, while several Stonkers lay hidden and kept throwing tankards at them. That was the night when the Stonkers poured eighteen pints of beer into the mess aspidistra. This was more rewarding than it sounds, because the aspidistra was on the head of Frankie Wainwright, who was sitting in a basket chair on one of the tables. He had got up there to play "Barber's Shop," and had been lathered by Shorty Porter with the stove brush.

Stonkers are unscrupulous about food, and often take six pieces of toast at tea, although they know the ration is only three. Their argument is that there is no real toast shortage, and the mess committee will have to get every officer some tea, anyway, so nobody is going to suffer. Stonkers have strong ideas about the mess committee, and are likely to put out of the window any new piece of furniture which they do not like. Stonkers are polite to senior officers, but are not very well liked by them in spite of this.

I do want a clear distinction to be drawn between Stonkers and the Plumbers. The Plumbers gather round the small stove in Plumbers' Corner and drink beer. They talk a lot of shop, and very seldom laugh, except at quite obvious things like cartoons in the Sunday papers. They do not understand stonking, either by that or any other name, and while not actually resenting such things as the Doc's singing hymns in harmony with Steamer Browne, they are plainly puzzled as to why this is done.

Stonkers are very understanding. They go to the cinema a lot, and are not self-conscious about joining in community singing. Many of them read good books, some even play chess, and they would all do anything in the world for anybody, even a senior officer or a Plumber.

J. B. B.

Carnations

MY half-section has just been pelted with carnations. Till today I never believed that such things really happened to anybody, even Field Marshal Montgomery. But if you are a member of a liberating army stranger things than that happen to you in this garden country of Italy. It set me thinking of other momentous carnations of my life.

They have all been button-holes. I don't think that anything will equal the light-blue carnation which I wore as a small boy on my first visit to

Lord's for the University Match. Someone had told me that if you put the stalk of a white carnation in ink overnight it would suck up enough ink to tint it blue. They were wrong. It doesn't. It dies. When that failed I had to have recourse to putting ink on the business end. The mess was indescribable—both then and there and at the match. It was one of those years when it rained all the first day, and the clotted ink from the petals dribbled and drabbled down over my new grey flannel blazer. There was a lot of trouble when I got home. Next year I appeared behind a small thicket of asparagus leaves and plumbago, with the stalks neatly wired up and encased in silver paper. About such monstrosities the less said the better. To the true button-holists they are worse than a made-up evening tie.

At school only the high and mighty were allowed to wear button-holes, and though I achieved that privilege in the end, I had passed another carnation milestone before then—the first carnation picked for me by my true love. Nothing further came of the romance, and in truth, I believe I was more in love with the lady's tennis than with her person or her sweet nature. She was too shy to put it in my coat with her own fair fingers, and I was too shy to ask her to. And so we drifted apart. The next day, as her partner, I was back at my old bad tricks, poaching at the net, and she, in revenge, was deliberately serving at my right ear. Disillusioned, that carnation withered early.

Towards the end of my schooldays I sowed my wild oats in button-holes. Nothing was too large, too small, too garish, too unusual. Primroses in my High Tory phase, scarlet-runners when I had a rush of sentimental Leftism to the head. A pink rose (because of Algernon's in *The Importance of Being Earnest*) when I was in love again. A gardenia after seeing Lord Lonsdale in the distance at a boxing match. An orchid after first reading Swinburne. Once, and once only, a large peony.

Now, in the late twenties, I have come back to carnations. I have vowed that when I am out of uniform again I shall wear nothing but white carnations. Just as a nun's veil only sits to perfection round the face of a redeemed sinner, so only the reformed rake of button-holing can wear a white carnation as I shall be able to do—by day without looking as though I was going to a wedding, by night without it making my shirt-front look "off white."

The only thing I do want to know is how to stop the beastly things giving me hay-fever.

Taking Over

LIEUTENANT SYMPSON and I have been uprooted from our comfortable job at El Cuckoo. Like most of the places we have visited in the Army, we did not think much of it while we were there, but it seems now to be definitely Paradise Lost.

"With the end of the Near-Finish in sight," said Sympson irritably, "I think the War Office might have left us where we were. Kugombas are even slower than they are sure, and it is hard work teaching them a new job. Also, it will take months to work up another Solo school as good as the one we had in the officers' mess at El Cuckoo."

Over the journey I prefer to draw a veil. Experts differ as to whether it is easier to get Kugombas into a railway train or out of a railway train, but both operations are extremely nerve-racking. Even when naked, Kugombas are an odd shape, and with uniform and full equipment the effort of forcing them through the narrow doors provided by the Egyptian State Railways would have staggered a Brains Trust of Maskelyne, Devant, Cook, and Houdini.

The thinner and smaller men were eventually squeezed into the third-class compartment allotted to us, but the R.T.O. (as the train had already been delayed half an hour) decided that the only hope was to send the others first-class. The first-class compartments have wide windows, and ingress was effected speedily without accident, except that the window came

down with a crash on the last man in, Private Bully Gavomumkula, son of Pongo, leaving the less important half of him outside and his head and body inside. He travelled in this way to our destination, where he was extricated with a chisel.

We took over from 2068 Company, and the camp was the filthiest we had ever seen. There are only two sorts of camps in the Army: (a) the filthiest you have ever seen, (b) as clean as a new pin. The filthiest-you-have-ever-seen are the camps you take over from other people, and the clean-as-a-new-pin are the camps you leave behind. It is the same with houses in civil life.

However, the 2068 camp was absolutely frightful. They pretended that they had been doing their job of guarding the Depot, but this was sheer nonsense. They had only been on the site two months, and they had only a limited number of men.

"It is quite clear," said Sympson, "that they have not had time to do any guarding. A few men like that in two months could not have wrought such destruction unless they concentrated their whole minds on destroying and making a mess."

The Detachment Commander asked if we would like a drink before we took over. We said we would. He was a nice man who told us a splittingly funny story about an aunt of his at Nottingham, and when he and his men had gone we found that we had signed a document saying that the camp was in a satisfactory state and that there were fourteen tents, nine tubs, washing, twenty-three forms D.T., and all sorts

of other luxuries. Actually there were not, and I was very angry about it.

"We are one tent, six tubs, washing, eleven fly-traps and seven forms D.T., down," I said.

At that moment the phone rang.

"The man we took over from," I said, "leaving him a camp as clean as a new pin, says that the place is the filthiest that he has ever seen, and that owing to the Cyprus brandy we made him drink he has erroneously signed for two tents, one cupboard (bread), eleven fly-traps, one scoop, cooks, and seven forms D.T."

"You will find them in our small trunk," said Sympson, "but the barrack officer is coming at eleven, so keep them in reserve. His name is Hoskins, and if he is the Hoskins I knew at Benghazi, our troubles are over, but if he is another Hoskins we may need something up our sleeve."

Buzz Stop

HERE, before it blew up, is where we used to queue up. Here stood a notice BUS STOP BY REQUEST, ignored by drivers with the greatest zest (they being already too full up to pull up). Here at dead of night with nobody in sight a buzz bomb stopped (at nobody's request) and dropped. It's odd. There is a current local rumour of a new type, armed with perverted sense of humour.



"11 pairs of feet, 12 pairs of feet—ah, here we are, 13 and 14, Row F."

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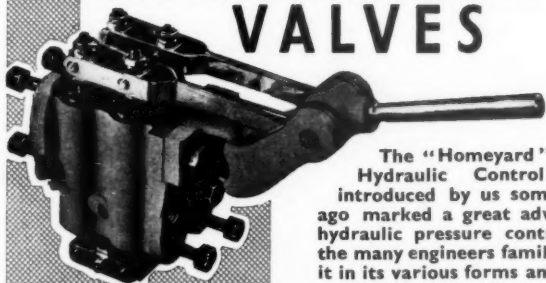
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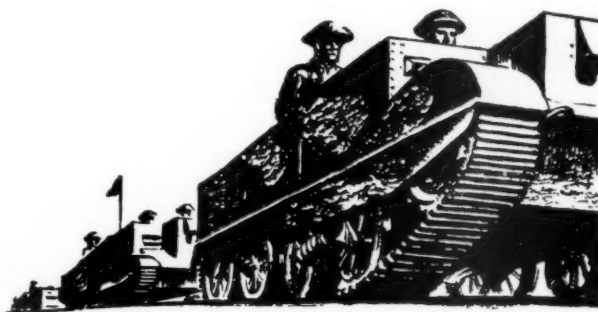
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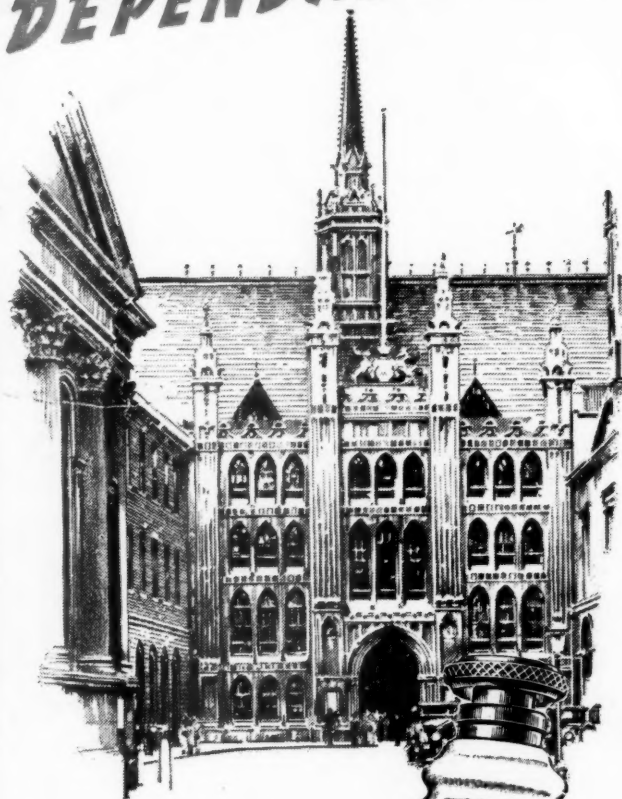
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